

VZCZCXRO0292  
OO RUEHCN RUEHGH RUEHVC  
DE RUEHBJ #3121/01 2270936  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 140936Z AUG 08  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9185  
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 003121

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/14/2028  
TAGS: PHUM PGOV PREL KOLY CH  
SUBJECT: BEIJING "PROTEST ZONES" ONLY ON PAPER

REF: A. A) BEIJING 2865  
    1B. B) BEIJING 3109  
    1C. C) BEIJING 2393

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson. Reasons 1.  
4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: PolOffs have observed no protests or preparations for protests at any of the three officially-designated "protest zones" established by the Chinese Government for use during the Olympics. Though the Public Security Bureau (PSB) refuses to release any information regarding applications to use the zones, information obtained from international human rights groups, media and Embassy contacts indicates that Chinese citizens applying to protest risk detention and/or removal from Beijing. END SUMMARY.

Background: "Protest Zones" Established

---

12. (U) Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG) Security Director Liu Shaowu announced on July 23 that Beijing would establish three "demonstration zones" during the Olympics (ref A). The three zones he announced are located at World Park (Fengtai District), Zizhuyuan (or Purple Bamboo) Park (Haidian District) and Ritan (or Temple of the Sun) Park (Chaoyang District). Liu stated that protesters would need to apply in advance for permission to demonstrate in the zones. Chinese and foreign media noted that demonstration zones were set up at previous Olympic Games, including Athens and Salt Lake City, as well as in China during the 1995 UN Women's Conference in Beijing. Articles in the Chinese media applauded the move as a sign of China's "openness."

Zones Have Remained Quiet throughout Games

---

13. (C) In daily visits since August 4, PolOffs have observed no protest activity at the three designated "protest zones." Security personnel and park management have generally either claimed to be ignorant of the existence of the protest zones or else provided minimal (and sometimes contradictory) information when approached by PolOffs. Additionally, PolOffs noted no preparations for protests at any of the three parks. World Park Marketing and Publicity Director Liu Huixiang (strictly protect) informed PolOff on August 5 that the park would only make arrangements once it received notice from the PSB that a protest had been approved. Security personnel at Ritan Park told PolOff on August 13 that no preparations had been made for demonstrations. Another park worker told PolOff August 5 that any protests would be restricted to Ritan's eastern periphery. Park officials have repeatedly claimed they have received no applications for protests.

Registering Means Taking a Risk

14. (C) Applying for permission to demonstrate in the designated "protest zones" has led to applicants' detention and/or removal from Beijing, according to international human rights groups, media and Embassy contacts. Human Rights Watch reported on August 13 that there have been at least three instances of Chinese citizens who were either detained or removed from Beijing after applying to protest during the Olympics. Additionally, some protesters unable to gain permission to protest end up in detention after protesting the denial of protest permission. Shan Chun (protect), a Beijing resident and former government official whose application to protest during the Olympics was rejected twice, told PolOff August 14 that she and her partner were detained on Tiananmen Square August 11 while protesting the rejection. Shan said that her partner, Chen Dashan, is still being held and that she is "very concerned" about his safety. Shan is particularly angry that the police have provided "no reason" for rejecting her application. "If they do not want us to apply, then they should not create such policies."

15. (SBU) Post is aware of no individual or group that has been granted permission to demonstrate in one of the protest zones. Beijing PSB officers, citing "privacy concerns," refused to disclose to PolOff the number of applications they have received. Asked at the August 13 MFA press briefing by a foreign media organization to provide the exact number of people who have applied to protest in any of the three "protest parks" in Beijing, MFA spokesman Qin Gang said he does not have specific information or figures (ref B).

BEIJING 00003121 002 OF 002

According to media reports, one of the groups refused permission to protest is the China Civil Association for the Protection of the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands (zhongguo minjian baodiao xiehui). PolOff observed the same group holding a sanctioned protest in front of the Japanese Embassy June 18 (ref C).

Rules Appear Not to Have Changed

16. (C) An officer surnamed Ma at the Entry and Exit Bureau, who said his job is to process foreigners' protest applications, said that the laws, regulations and procedures for protest applications have not changed at all since the start of the Olympics. The only difference, he said, is that any protests approved during the Games could only take place in one of the three official zones "so as not to affect the Olympic athletes or other visitors." Ma referred PolOff to the 1989 Law of the People's Republic of China on Assemblies, Processions and Demonstrations, saying that all the procedures currently in use are described in this piece of legislation. The section of the law that describes factors for refusing permission for a given protest includes a stipulation that no demonstration will be allowed that "rejects the basic principles specified in the Constitution, harms national unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity or instigates ethnic separatism." Applications will also be rejected if there is a belief that the demonstration would "directly endanger or seriously harm public order."

Information Difficult to Obtain

17. (C) PolOff spoke to multiple PSB departments both in person and on the phone seeking information on the application process for protest zones. An officer at Haidian District PSB surnamed Chen confirmed that Chinese citizens wishing to apply to protest at Zizhuyuan Park could do so at that police station, however he "knew nothing about it." Regarding protests by foreigners, an official at the Beijing Entry and Exit Bureau told PolOff August 13 that inquiries

regarding the protest zones "must be made in person" at the Entry and Exit Bureau's "Foreigner Dispute Resolution Desk." Though the official told PolOff that procedures for protests had not changed and confirmed that he is charged with processing foreigners' applications to protest, he said that he was unable to answer any questions regarding protests and referred PolOff to the Beijing PSB News Office. An official at that office instructed PolOff to "use the appropriate channels" but refused to provide contact information.

RANDT

RANDT